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THE COLLEGE WOMAN'S OPPORTUNITY

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BY

MRS. LAWRENCE THURSTON

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STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT
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for Foreign Missions

THE COLLEGE WOMAN'S OPPORTUNITY

NO more important question ever comes before us for settlement than that involving our choice of a life-work. Life begins to count when a purpose comes in to control it and guide it toward some worthy end. Some of us can remember the moment when it first flashed upon us that we might do some great thing with our lives. Perhaps there was a struggle; perhaps our hearts responded at once to God's touch and we accepted His purpose; however it came, it meant the beginning of life that was worth living.

We are too much afraid of letting our emotions move us, for the great heart impulses are meant by the Spirit who inspires them to result in deeds of love and service to others. These impulses are not lacking, if only we open our hearts to receive them. God can fill us with His Spirit of world-embracing love, and the service in which the love of Christ constrains us is what the world most needs. Yet God has given us our reason and our judgment and would not have us do violence to these. He calls us to "reasonable service," and so we are justified in all our effort to know those things which we need to know in order to choose intelligently our life-work.

We live in a day of wonderful opportunities. It is true for us, as it has never been true before, that we "live in a world." Our point of view as we look out upon life is not that of our grandmothers. Our world is both larger and smaller than theirs; larger, because we know so much more about it, and lands unknown to them are every-day facts to us; smaller, because in point of time and ease of access the world to-day is nearer to us in all its parts than the North and South, East and West of our own land were to our grandmothers. When we face the question of what our work in

life shall be, it is but reasonable that the question, "Where shall I work?" should take us beyond the town or city in which we live, beyond even the homeland itself, out into the larger world which is open to us as to no previous generation. The work which calls us across the seas is one which we cannot know in the way we know the work which we may do here at home; and although we may think we are always having it forced upon us, it still remains true that we do not know as we should the work in the foreign field, nor do we realize the opportunities that might be ours and the responsibilities that rest upon us.

MISSIONARY LIFE MISUNDERSTOOD

In the minds of most college students there is very little real knowledge of the life and work of the modern missionary, and in place of such knowledge there is often a host of misconceptions and prejudices which make clear thinking on the subject almost impossible. Even those students who are fairly intelligent in regard to missions in general show by questions and passing remarks that there is very little that is definite in their thought of the work a college woman would do on the other side of the world. The explanation of this is not that any one has misrepresented the case, but rather that all the accounts have left us to fill in the details for ourselves, and we have not known how to do it.

Pioneer records have been until recent years almost our only source of information. The life of Livingstone, the labors of Judson, the trials of Morrison—from such accounts as these we get much of our information in regard to life in Africa, India, and China; and we think of it in terms of the pioneer days when the foundations were laid, forgetting that it is nearly a century since the first

men and women did their work, and that conditions of life in the foreign field are not the same now as then.

Another popular source of information, the missionary magazine, fails to give us a true idea of the every-day life, for the same reason that our daily newspapers would fail if we were not able to fill in the background... Both record the unusual events, because they are the things in which people are most interested. Sepoy mutinies, Armenian massacres, and Boxer outbreaks loom large in our thought of life in India, Turkey, or China, and we think of those who have gone out as living in an atmosphere charged with such happenings. We forget that there has been but one Sepoy mutiny and one Boxer outbreak in the century of missionary work in India and China; and we may not know that in all the weeks of the massacres of 1895, although Armenians were killed by the thousands, not a single American missionary lost his life. Yet when I was under appointment to Turkey a few years ago the most frequent question asked me was, "Aren't you afraid of being killed by the Kurds?" My reply was that I thought no more about it than of being killed in a railway accident every time I went on board a train. If sudden death is the thing of all things to avoid, the chances are better in China than in New York City.

Even the ordinary letters from missionaries on the field fail to give a clear idea of the manner of life, because they, too, are more apt to speak of what is unusual than of what is the daily experience. Life is more or less a matter of routine in a girls' school in Turkey, very much like life in a girls' school in America, and the missionary does not think that this routine would be interesting to the ordinary reader; so she writes of the vacation tour among the villages, or a visit to the homes of some of her pupils, or the strange

wedding customs of the people among whom she is working, just as the college girl tells of the last glee club concert, or the last football game, or the vacation visit with a friend.

The result is that most people in America think of missionary life as very romantic, or very abnormal, and fail to appreciate the real hardships of life in the foreign field. The "globe-trotter," who expects to find missionaries living in mud hovels, comes home to accuse them of extravagance because they live comfortably, but even this does not seem to throw any light on the subject in the minds of Christian people. The truth lies between the extremes here as in most cases. The every-day life of the college woman in the foreign field is a perfectly normal life. She makes her own home there as here; and in these days, when the ends of the earth meet, it is no more difficult to have American furniture in China than to have Canton matting in America. The average missionary home in the foreign field is about the kind of home which the same people would have in this country.

THE WORK OF MISSIONS LITTLE KNOWN

The prejudices and misconceptions which have gathered about our thought of life in the foreign field extend also to the work. Hundreds of people who think that they "do not believe in foreign missions," would find, if they investigated the case, that most foreign missionaries do not approve any more than they of the things to which they object, and that these things find little place in missionary work. Ignorance is the mother of prejudice here as everywhere, and ignorance of the methods and aims of our foreign missionary work is one cause of indifference among Christian people.

While under appointment to Turkey, I was asked by a college

graduate to tell her about the work I expected to do. When I had told her about the college in which I was to teach, naming such familiar subjects as science, history, and English as a part of the work, her surprise expressed itself in the remark, "O, I thought you were going out as a missionary!" Her conception of "going out as a missionary" had no place in it for such familiar work as teaching history. She thought of me, doubtless, as going about the streets of an Oriental city with a baby organ, gathering a crowd in Salvation army style and then preaching a sermon. Some such work, or sitting under a palm tree teaching naked savages to read the Bible, is all that "going out as a missionary" suggests even to many college girls. It may be some such misconceptions of the work do stand in the way of a thoughtful consideration of it as a life-work. It does not seem to us as important as work we can do at home, and so we turn from it to do that which lies near at hand.

MEDICAL WORK

What is the work of a woman who goes out as a foreign missionary? It seems to be very frequently the case that the college girl who is considering missionary work thinks first of medical work as most needed. Although I had always expected to teach, when I decided to be a missionary I thought I must take a medical course; but when a Board secretary said to me, "Medical workers are a luxury, teachers are an absolute necessity," I went on with my preparation for teaching. Among American missionary women in non-Christian lands the proportion of medical to other workers is one to seventeen. If a right proportion of women studying medicine should offer for the foreign field the need in medical work would be met.

The need is great and the Boards are constantly in search of

fully qualified physicians and nurses. The work itself needs little explanation. In Korea, China, India, Africa, and all Mohammedan lands women physicians and trained nurses are needed, if the sickness and suffering of women are to be alleviated. In all the advance work the medical missionary is the best opener of doors. Homes which open to no other welcome her gladly; and when no other explanation would be understood, the Christ-like life of the medical missionary appeals to the hearts of those whom she has helped. It will be her joy when asked, "Why do you do it?" to explain the love of Christ to the inquiring woman—princess or peasant she may be—whose need for Christ is as great as our own.

The opportunities in mission lands for research work in diseases not commonly found in more civilized countries are a challenge to the woman who is ambitious in her profession. What physician does not desire to add to the body of knowledge which is helping everywhere in the battle against disease and physical suffering? In Turkey a physician testifies that one attraction in the work there is the larger opportunity to practice surgery.

Besides the actual practice of medicine, the training of women to help both in the hospital and in the outside work is very important. Beginnings are made in many places along the line of medical education for women of Oriental countries. We find Miss Swain, the first woman physician sent to India, in less than three months after her arrival forming a class of sixteen native educated girls for the study of medicine. The first Medical College for Women in China was opened in 1902 in Canton. The "China Mail" in an editorial writes: "Among the present-day developments of mission work and general progress, there is nothing of more importance than the thorough training of Chinese women in Western medicine and surgery. The field

for such, when properly qualified, is practically limitless." The ideal for every hospital is to have its nurses' training class, and in every foreign land the woman physician has a large field of work in the training of women who will multiply a hundred fold her work of lessening the suffering of the world and of making known the Great Physician who can heal the soul as well as the body.

EVANGELISTIC EFFORT

The term evangelistic work is applied to a very large variety of work done by women on the foreign field. Strictly speaking, all the work is evangelistic. The teacher in a girls' school, the physician in the hospital, the missionary mother in her home, are all as truly evangelistic workers as the one who is known by that special name. Evangelistic effort is what is generally known as "missionary work," but is all too generally misunderstood. It may be described under the heads of station work and touring. The proportion of time given to the two varies widely in different places. The station work would include a Bible women's class for the women who are to go among the women in their homes, teaching them not merely the Bible and Christian truth, but things which will help them to know the world in which they live. The afternoon may be spent in visiting the homes of Christian women and their neighbors in an ever enlarging circle that are open to the worker, a meeting for women in a room connected with the church, or a mothers' meeting in one of the missionary homes in the station. From time to time a "station class" is held for women gathered in from the surrounding towns and villages. In this the local Bible women help, and for a month or so these country women are taught chiefly the message of Christ, but many learn to read in these classes and make a beginning in the intellectual life which Christ brings to women.

Touring takes the missionary out into the smaller places, where for a shorter time she would do the same work as in her own station. She would find a nucleus of Christian women who would welcome her coming and who would be strengthened in their Christian living by her visit. Each visit would see some coming for the first time to hear of Christ, and others ready to take the last step of open confession. In these smaller places she might find herself called to act as superintendent of schools, for nearly every woman in evangelistic work has under her charge a number of village schools. These are taught by native women, graduates or former students of the higher educational institutions of the mission. For this work, if all its opportunities are to be realized, a college course, or a normal course and some years of experience in teaching would not come amiss. What if it does involve some discomforts, such as horseback riding or staying in Chinese inns! If we find ourselves forced to see them as hardships, they are only incidental in life, and it is worth while to pay the price of being "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." If we take to the foreign field a proper sense of humor, we may find these experiences adding an interesting variety to life.

THE MISSIONARY'S WIFE

The service rendered by missionary wives, who are more than half the women on the foreign field, is no small part of the whole, and they do a work than others cannot do. The Christian home is one of the best things we have to give to the people of the Orient; and if the missionary's wife does no more than make this home and share it with the people among whom she lives she does a work that is worth doing. Usually she does a great deal more, taking a large part of the work among women, teaching classes in the boys' school,

perhaps having charge of a girls' school in addition to all her other work. If a physician, or trained nurse, her opportunities are unlimited. She can speak in the mothers' meetings and give much needed instruction to the ignorant women in the things pertaining to their life and the training of their children. One missionary mother founded the only college for girls in Spain; another publishes mimeographed books and conducts a circulating library in Turkey; another superintends the industrial work and manages an orphanage.

EDUCATIONAL MISSIONARIES

One place where college women are greatly needed to-day is in the educational institutions which are already established in every field, or which might be established if all the open doors of opportunity were entered. Many a school is in a transition stage and needs a woman of large vision, broad attainments, and good executive ability to develop it into the high school or college which it is ready to become. The opportunity is in some ways greater in such a place than in the higher school, where mere teaching ability is enough. A large majority of the college women sent out by our Boards are doing this work, and they are not wasting their talents in any direction. The schools and colleges which have been established on the mission field are centers for the spread of Christian knowledge in some places where no other agency would be effective; and in all cases they strengthen and confirm Christian life and character. In them the leaders of the Christian community are being trained. The beginnings of this work in every place were humble, but the results already achieved surpass even the dreams of those who laid the foundations. The first students in what is now the Central Turkey College for Girls in Marash were ten girls whom Mrs. Coffing persuaded to come together for study. The first class was in the alphabet,

for not half of them could read. To-day there are over ninety girls in the five classes of the college. The Seniors and Juniors are studying, besides the Bible and Christian evidences, ethics, psychology, English literature and history, physiology, astronomy, geology, biology, physics, algebra and geometry. They use English text-books because there are no suitable ones in Turkish, and do work which compares favorably with that done in schools of the same grade in America. The graduates of the college teach in the city and village schools of the province of Cilicia, or are the wives of pastors and teachers and other leading men in the large Christian community which has grown up as the result of the half-century of missionary work.

The service rendered in Turkey in the higher education of women has been "an influence that has changed the whole aspect of society within the sphere of its operation, has postponed the marriage of young girls four or five years and given them the opportunity for physical, mental and spiritual development; and already has brought forth a new generation on a conspicuously higher plane of life."*

Marash College is not an exceptional institution. In every country where foreign missionary work is done there has come sooner or later a demand for the education of women. Many such schools are to be found in the mission field; and ten years from now they will exist in still larger numbers, for the standard is ever being raised, and the high schools and seminaries of to-day will be the colleges of to-morrow. Even now they are exerting the same kind of influence as our colleges in their several communities. It would not be fair to judge them in comparison with the largest and oldest women's colleges in America. They lack in equipment, and the curriculum seems very meagre, more like our high schools; but I doubt if the average Smith

* Dr. C. C. Tracy in "Missions in Asiatic Turkey."

or Bryn Mawr or Mt. Holyoke girl has as great an influence as the average graduate of these mission colleges. She is certainly not so far above the average woman of her country in general intelligence and breadth of view as are the college girls of Turkey and India and China.

TRAINING DESIRABLE

Such work calls for the broadest, most all-round training that our best colleges can give. Frequently people are heard to say that a girl is "too good for the foreign field," or that she will be "wasted on the heathen." Anyone who knows the facts would declare with Miss Rouse that "in the mission field there is scope—nay, demand—for every manner of special training and qualification that a young woman is likely to have at the close of her college or professional course." Most of those who have been in the foreign field would give the same advice that Miss Thoburn gave to us at Northfield, "If there is anything you don't know, learn it." A college course, with two or three years of teaching, or some practical experience, would seem to be the minimum. A normal course, a course in nursing, practical knowledge of business methods, particularly of bookkeeping, literary ability, musical ability and training—not one of these would be wasted.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There is no service at home or abroad in which a Christian college woman can make her life count for more in extending the Kingdom of God than in this work for the women of the Orient. Those who are doing it to-day would not change places with any in this country. Writing of the opportunity in India, Miss Rouse says: "The Christian boarding-school and the personal work of the Christian teacher, not the home or the church, mold the mothers of the future. . . . What an unparalleled opportunity belongs to those who train the

wives of the Christians, especially of the native pastors and teachers! These are invariably educated in the boarding-schools and go out with their husbands to be teachers and examples in dark and lonely places." Less than one one-hundredth of the women in India are Christians; but four-fifths of the girls in secondary schools are Christian girls, and these are the ones who are coming forward as India's leading women. "As are their missionary teachers, so will they be. The influence of such a woman as Miss Thoburn of the Lucknow Woman's College of the Methodist Episcopal Mission is simply incalculable." And the uniqueness of the opportunity for the Christian teacher in India lies in this: "In America you are but one Christian influence among many on the girls you teach. Mother, home, and church will mold with more force probably than you. In India, on the contrary, good home training is as yet conspicuously lacking, even among Christians; in the native churches the teaching is most immature; it is in the school that all these defects must be remedied."*

In China the present is a time of peculiar opportunity. Only those who have been in the East during the last five years can know how that great nation is rousing herself from her age-long slumber and finding out that she has been left behind in the race. There is a thirst for Western learning which will be satisfied in some way. An English college woman writes from Central China: "The result of this is that the mission high schools and colleges are crowded to their utmost capacity, and scores of applicants have to be refused; and they turn elsewhere to anyone who has, or professes to have, some knowledge of Western subjects." She then describes a visit to a school started under official auspices for the ladies of official families. "The pupils, who seemed to range in age from fifteen to forty or more,

* *The Intercollegian*, April, 1901.

were loitering about, chatting, drinking tea, and watching the foreign visitors. . . . As far as we could gather, each class lasts half an hour and the interval between two classes for recreation—i. e. tea-drinking and gossip—an hour or more." The subjects taught were some kind of physical culture, singing, and Japanese. "The learning of English is probably that to which most of the students look forward as the height of their intellectual ambition." The school is in charge of three or four Japanese ladies and one Chinese teacher, who acts as interpreter. "The majority of the pupils will, probably, at most, stay only a year or two in the school and will then leave, imagining that they have had a Western education, because they have been taught by foreigners, who, as a matter of fact, have not sufficient knowledge of Chinese to teach them anything thoroughly.

" 'Well, what do you think of the school?' we asked the Christian woman who had gone with us. 'The building is indeed good,' she answered; 'but they seem to spend much time playing, and they do not teach the True Doctrine, which is the most important of all.' It was the reply of an ignorant woman, who, four or five years ago, could not read a word of her own language, and who now can scarcely do more than read her New Testament; but to whom the truth as it is in Jesus is indeed the light of life. And surely she had caught the true view of things. As one thought of the immensity of the opportunity, one's heart was filled with a deep desire that it might be used for Christ and the extension of His Kingdom. And why should it not? Why should not the Christian Church provide schools as well equipped as those established by heathen rulers and send out women who will teach for the love of Christ and with the one desire of bringing to the knowledge of the truth these women and girls who are blindly groping after something better than they have

known before?" The Christian college woman who goes out to China to-day goes out to have a part in the molding of an empire. It is not enough that the men of China should be won for Christ; the women, too, need Him for their highest life.

Japan may have learned all she can from Western nations about naval warfare and modern surgery, but there is much that we can teach our Japanese sisters about the higher things in life. A beginning has been made. "Japanese girlhood is being transformed, and the home is being won for Christ. The maiden of modern Japan is living in a new world of ideas and aspirations—a world that is grander and in every way more glorious than that in which her mother moved. Her heart beats in sympathy not only with the history, experience and wisdom of her own native land, but with the common heritage of all Christian nations. Pantheism, which made personality a cipher, is passing away as a vapor, and, educated in the idea of one God and Father, she thrills with the consciousness of her birthright in Christ Jesus, and of her own worth and personality in the making of the nation."* No other work is more fruitful in the long run, than the education of girls and the saving of the home for Christ. In Japan, as in India, this is the special opportunity of the Christian teacher.

THE NEED

A number of years ago the report went out that there were more men and women ready to go to the foreign field than the Boards could send because of the lack of funds. Whatever may have been true then, and whatever may be true to-day in regard to men, the number of women qualified for the work who apply to the Boards is less than the vacancies in the work already established. One Board secretary

* W. E. Griffis: "Dux Christus," 221.

writes, "The truth is, there are very few young women offering for service abroad, fewer than I have known for a long time." This is to comfort workers who have been asking for two years for a teacher. There are positions in schools in every mission country which had been vacant for years before the persons, with proper qualifications, were found to fill them. There are few of the stations on the field, if any, where the number of workers is sufficient for the work. There are scores of places where two people are trying to do the work of three, or where one is breaking down under work that calls for at least two to carry it on. Marash College, where according to the vote of the Mission there should always be at least three teachers, had a period of eleven years during which for one year only were there three at work. In Canton there is a girls' school where two teachers are urgently needed. The work has been carried on for a number of years by the wife of a missionary there, in addition to her work among the women and her home duties. She cannot possibly carry the burden longer. These workers would be sent at once if they could be found, and the opportunity is one of the most attractive. There are openings for teachers in kindergarten, primary, grammar, high school, college and normal work. There is especial need of teachers who can do normal work, for in most schools the foreign teacher works through others in the more elementary work and superintends the work of native teachers.

The North China Mission of the American Board, in June, 1904, issued "An Appeal to the Young Women in America." "Here is specific work calling now for eleven young women. Were they all on the field, we should need to call for as many more in 1905." Not half the number have been sent. These are merely indications of the conditions which prevail everywhere in the foreign field.

There is need of more money for this work. Our responsibility is not ended when we apply to the Boards, and if it were true that they were rejecting suitable candidates on account of lack of funds, it would be our duty to see that the money was forthcoming for our support. There are many women who could be self-supporting and whose going would interest other people of wealth in the work. What is needed is that spirit of consecration among Christian people which will not hold back either life service or money needed for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. There is no conflict between the need at home and abroad. The spirit needed in our churches for the work at home is this very spirit of desire that God's Kingdom may come. There are workers enough and there is money enough in the Christian Church for advance in every part of the world.

THE MOTIVE

Are we letting a practical skepticism hold us back at this point? There is no question that among Christian people as a whole this is the case. Along with the selfishness and worldliness which rejoice in any excuse for escape from Christian obligations there goes a deep-seated skepticism in regard to the whole work of foreign missions. And yet, "if we believe in Jesus Christ, we must believe in foreign missions." Henry van Dyke says: "It is not so much a question as to whether the heathen can be saved without Christ as whether we can be saved if we keep our Christianity to ourselves."* Dr. Brown writes: "The question is not at all whether the Chinese or anybody else desire Christ, but whether they need Him, and a man's answer to that question largely depends upon his own relation to Christ. If we need Him, the Chinese do. If He has done anything for us, if He

* Henry Van Dyke: "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," 311.

has brought any dignity and power and peace into our lives, the probabilities are that He can do as much for the Chinese."* The author of "A Study of Christian Missions" declares: "Fellowship with God and loyalty to Christ absolutely require that we do the missionary work because of the present need. One who will not join in it simply does not stand with God."† "That the nations of the world, being without the knowledge of Christ, are without the best in religion and in life; that for want of this knowledge they are unutterably depressed and degraded in the character of their living; that as men and as peoples they need the spiritual light and life which we know through Christ; this, together with God's interest in the matter and call to us to work with Him, is a more than sufficient motive. If we withhold ourselves from the work, it will not be for want of sufficient motive, but for want of worthy response." ‡

THE CALL

The misconceptions of missionary life and work have thrown about the question as to what constitutes a call a haze of sentimentality which has too often obscured the vision of those who were already called in the way that God has called most of His workers in this and other service. How did the call come to Isaiah? The question he heard was, "Whom shall I send, and whom will go for us?" God is saying the same to-day, and He is waiting to hear the same willing response, "Here am I, send me." A disclosed opportunity is a call of God. Knowledge of a need and the ability to meet that need constitute a call. With the need of the foreign field so vastly more

* Arthur J. Brown: "New Forces in Old China," 357.
† W. N. Clarke: "A Study of Christian Missions," 49.
‡ Ibid., 45.

than the need at home, it might seem reasonable to demand some special evidence that we should stay at home; everything is in favor of our going if we can. God does very clearly call many to stay at home. Only a small proportion of the Christian women of America are fitted by education and experience to do this work, which calls for our very best. Within this circle some are called to stay at home, because of physical unfitness for the work. The requirements are not unreasonable; "sound health and reasonable prudence in the care of it" will constitute physical fitness, but unfortunately that rules out many in the circle of those who possess the intellectual qualifications. A third limitation, which is one of God's calls to stay at home, is the existence of home obligations—actual obligations which would make it equally impossible to leave home for other purposes. Are you within this smaller circle? Are you one of those to whom the five talents have been given of the college education? Are you one of those to whom God has given one of His best gifts, physical health? Are you free to leave home? Then the call comes to you with great urgency. "Have you any reason for not going that you could give to Jesus Christ?"

The work is "reasonable service," the opportunity looms large, the need is urgent, the motive is sufficient, the call is heard; why are we not answering as God would have us answer? The question becomes more perplexing when we see the response that is made to other calls. Was there any dearth of candidates as teachers for the Philippines when our Government issued the call? Fifteen thousand were examined for five hundred appointments. When the United States called for ten men to go out to China as legation students two hundred and fifty applied for appointment. There are more foreigners in China in business and government positions than for the service of

Christ; and they have accepted all the essential hardships of missionary life—the exile from home and friends, and the exposure to a climate that is not the most favorable to health. Why is it that when the call comes for men and women to go out as representatives of "the civilization of the Kingdom of God," as "ambassadors for Christ," Christian students hold back?

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CALL

The attitude of Christian people toward the foreign missionary enterprise and toward those who go is a partial explanation of the present situation. The opposition of Christian parents is one of the chief obstacles to the progress of the work. The difference in the attitude of Christians toward those who go out for Christ's sake and those who go out for other reasons is very marked. The folly of the distinction is clearly shown in the case of two girls in a city in New York State who are engaged to men going to Japan. One man is going out to a business position, the other as a missionary. The girl who is engaged to the business man is being congratulated and people say to her parents, "What a fine opening! and what a fine chance for your daughter to see the world!" The girl who is engaged to the missionary is receiving the usual amount of unnecessary pity, and people make it harder for her mother by saying, "What a great sacrifice! How can you let your daughter go?"

There is not enough of seeking to know God's will, to find out His plan for our lives. We drift into teaching, or settlement work, or nursing, or literary work, or no work at all. We plan our lives without ever asking God whether He has some special work for us, and we set aside this work of extending the borders of the Kingdom as something for others to do. It must grieve the Heavenly Father that we

do not take Him into our councils and let Him show us His plan. Whether it be to go or stay, that plan is the best for our lives, and only as we find it and make it ours can our lives be all that they are capable of being. More lives are failures because people are not following God's plan for them than for any other reason.

We are not honest in facing this question. After all, the fundamental question is whether or not we are willing to do God's will; and unwillingness keeps us from being honest with ourselves and with God in dealing with the matter. It shows itself in fearfulness. A case comes to mind of a girl who was asked whether she had ever considered this question. She replied that she had thought about it for a year or more and that she was undecided as to what she ought to do. When pressed for reasons she said that health was not lacking, but she was an only daughter and her mother was a widow and something of an invalid. As if God would not have us use consecrated judgment in such a matter! God would have made His will clear if she had fearlessly faced the question. He was calling her to stay at home, but unwillingness to go kept her from finding out God's will. The evidences of this lack of honesty in dealing with the call are appalling. God cannot use us anywhere if we are not willing to do His will. If we are, He will surely guide us into the right place.

MAKING THE DECISION

Lack of definite decision is certainly one reason for the dearth of workers. The question comes to most college students to-day in the form of the declaration, "It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary." Shall it be our purpose or not? Some of the reasons which are urged against forming the purpose are rather

reasons in favor of so doing. Home opposition, the first and perhaps the greatest obstacle, makes definite purpose much more necessary if we are ever to accomplish the work. If our parents and friends were ready to urge us on there would not be the same need of a firm purpose in the matter. Without it, a girl leaves college with an indefinite idea of being a missionary if her parents will consent. She goes out into an environment in which there is nothing to suggest such a thing as being a missionary and everything to suggest that she be something else. If she goes out without a firm purpose, the chances are she will not reach the goal. A declaration of the purpose is like an anchor in a storm and helps her to keep true until the storm blows over.

Another reason urged against making a declaration of the purpose is the fear of change. The purpose, if accepted in the right spirit, is recognized as God's purpose for us. The matter stands primarily between God and our own heart. If the volunteer who knew months before she declared her purpose "that she could never be honest before God and purpose to do anything else" had, for any reason, not declared that purpose, keeping it shut up in her own heart and later had proved false, she would have failed before God as completely as if she had made a declaration of the purpose and had not carried it out. It would seem sometimes as if we thought we could cheat God by keeping the world from knowing. It is really a false pride which stands in our way when we make such an excuse, and we deprive ourselves of the help and strength that would come from the declaration that we have accepted this purpose of God for our lives, and were ready in His strength to carry it out. If He does not permit, if circumstances so change that we are prevented from carrying it out, we shall never regret having accepted it. This is the testimony of all God-hindered volunteers. The others are no greater failures

because they declared the purpose, and those who hold back for fear of failing are no better than they.

The question is coming as the test question to students in our colleges to-day. The consecrated life, which is the only truly Christian life, depends on our decision. The honest decision and purpose to go, or to stay if that is God's will, will be the beginning of a life richer and more blessed than anything we have known before.

"God has His best things for the few
Who dare to stand the test;
He has His second choice for those
Who will not have the best."

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

There is no one who claims to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who is free from responsibility in this matter. The Christian life is a life of service and a life of service for the world. Those who stay at home, as well as those who go, have a part in the work of extending the Kingdom. But as we choose the place where we shall do this work, we find ourselves under a special obligation to choose the place where the opportunity is largest. Let us not miss our privilege in this service of our King. Our opportunity is the measure of our responsibility, and we shall be judged—we shall judge ourselves as we look back upon life—"not alone by what we have done, but by what we could have done." Let us try to look at life from God's point of view. Let us try to choose as we shall wish we had chosen when we look at things from the standpoint of eternity. The ambitions that tempt us now will look so small in that clearer light, the easy life that calls us with its siren voice will look so poor and mean

beside the things we could have done. The work needs us—but more than this we need the work for our highest life here and now and to fit us for the real life where "His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face."